

Application No. 10/049,803
Amendment Dated March 18, 2005
Reply to Office Action dated February 23, 2005

Amendment to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 - 62. (cancelled)

63. (currently amended) A communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

a listing database configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including a field containing wireless phone numbers of each a desired portion of said subscribers and a connect field that stores information instructing said communication assistance system as to whether to disclose mask said a subscriber's wireless phone number to a said requester, such that during a process that said requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, said connect field is examined to determine whether to disclose said subscriber's wireless phone number to said requester; and

a call center coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal that has access to said database listing table, wherein

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said connect field further comprises information instructing said communication assistance system as to whether or not to mask ~~disclose~~ said subscriber's wireless phone number to a customer representative who is handling a request from a requester.

64. (cancelled)

65. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 63, further comprising a plurality of said call centers remotely connected together via a communications channel, each of said call centers capable of routing a received phone call from each one of said requesters to another one of said call centers.

66. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 63, wherein said operator terminal is operated by a customer representative.

67. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 63, wherein said operator terminal is automated.

68. (cancelled)

69. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 63, wherein

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said listing database further comprises a pre-announcement field that contains instruction information as to whether a subscriber requires to be notified of a requester's identification information before completing a call from said requester to said subscriber.

70. (original) The system in accordance with claim 69, wherein said communications assistance system further comprises means to receive instructions from said subscriber as to whether to accept a call originated from said requester.

71. (original) The system in accordance with claim 69, wherein said communications assistance system further comprises means to receive instructions from said subscriber as to whether to reject a call originated from said requester.

72. (original) The system in accordance with claims 71, wherein said communications assistance system further comprises a means to receive instructions from said subscriber to direct a call from a requester directly to said subscriber's voicemail.

73. (original) The system in accordance with claim 71, wherein said communication assistance system further comprises a means to store in said listing database instructions from said subscriber to permanently reject all incoming calls from said individual requester.

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74. (original) The system in accordance with claim 71, or 72 or 73 wherein said communication assistance system provides an automated response to said requester, when said call is rejected by said subscriber.

75. (original) The system in accordance with claim 71, or 72 or 73 wherein said communication assistance system delivers a pre-recorded response to said requester, recorded by said subscriber, when said call is rejected by said subscriber.

76 – 132. (cancelled)

133. (currently amended) A communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

a first database configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

a communications interface for receiving requests for directory assistance via a requester ~~computer~~ communication terminal; and

an access database containing a plurality of access numbers corresponding to

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phone listing of each one of said subscribers stored in said first database, wherein said communications interface is further configured to deliver said access number corresponding to said requested phone listing to said requester communication terminal so as to provide an said assigned access number to a requester who is requesting a subscriber's telephone number, such that allowing said requester can to connect to a desired ~~said~~ subscribers using said assigned access number.

134. (original) The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising a call center coupled to said switch for routing each of said received calls from said requester to an operator terminal.

135. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising an operator terminal operated by a customer representative so as to retrieve information stored in said database.

136. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 133, further comprising an automated operator terminal so as to automatically retrieve information from said database.

137. (cancelled)

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138. (original) The system in accordance with claim 133, wherein said assigned access number when dialed provides access to said telephone switch and said access database, so as to retrieve a corresponding subscriber's phone number for call completion by said telephone switch.

139. (currently amended) The system in accordance with claim ~~138~~ 133, wherein said communication terminal employed by said requester is a wireless handheld device.

140. (currently amended) The system in accordance with claim ~~138~~ 133, wherein said communication terminal employed by said requester is a personal computer.

141 - 157. (cancelled)

158. (currently amended) A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch; and

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storing information in a listing database, corresponding to each of said subscribers, including a filed containing wireless phone numbers of each a desired portion of said subscribers and instructions in a connect field;

routing by a call center coupled to said switch, said received call from said requester to an operator terminal that has access to said database listing table, wherein said connect field further comprises information instructing said communication assistance system as to whether or not to mask said subscriber's wireless phone number to a customer representative who is handling said request from said requester; and

connecting a call from said requester to a desired subscriber's wireless phone number, such that during a process that said requester is being connected, said connect field is examined as to determine whether to disclose a said subscriber's wireless phone number to a said requester.

159 - 164. (cancelled)

165. (currently amended) A method of operating a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving calls from a plurality of a requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers at a telephone switch;

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accessing a first database and retrieving said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;
receiving requests at a communication interface for directory assistance via a requester communication device terminal; and
maintaining a plurality of access numbers corresponding to phone listing of each one of said subscribers stored in said first database in an access database, wherein said communications interface is further configured to deliver said access number corresponding to said requested phone listing to said requester communication terminal so as to provide ~~an~~ said assigned access number ~~to a requester who is requesting a subscriber's telephone number,~~ wherein said assigned access number disclosed to said requester is associated with subscriber's undisclosed telephone number, such that allowing said requester can to connect to a desired ~~said~~ subscriber using said assigned access number.

166 - 172. (cancelled)

173. (currently amended) A communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:
a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;
a database configured to store said information corresponding to each of said

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subscribers, wherein said database, for said information corresponding to each of said subscriber, maintains a first wireless phone number field, indicating that a stored telephone number is associated with a wireless telephone corresponding to said subscriber and a first mask field, indicating whether a stored wireless phone number remains masked to said requester such that during a process that said requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, said connect field is examined to determine whether to disclose said subscriber's wireless phone number to said requester.

174. (previously presented) The system in accordance with claim 173, wherein said database further maintains a second mask field, indicating whether said stored wireless phone number remains masked to a customer service representative.

175 - 177. (cancelled)

~~179~~ 178. (currently amended) In a communication assistance system a method for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the method comprising the steps of :

receiving requests from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

storing in a first database said information corresponding to each of said subscribers,

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including phone numbers of each of said subscribers;

routing to a call center coupled to said switch, each of said requests from said requester to an operator terminal;

providing said requests from said requester in a format desired by said requester, wherein said format includes either a voice call connection format or a non-voice format[.], wherein for said non-voice format, the method further comprises the step of communicating between a requester and a customer service representative operating said operator terminal, in a variety of formats selected from a list including short messaging service (SMS), wireless application protocol (WAP), live chat, and instant messaging.

[180]179. (cancelled)

180. (new) A communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers, the system comprising:

a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers;

a database configured to store said information corresponding to each of said subscribers, wherein said database, for said information corresponding to each of said subscriber, maintains a first wireless phone number field, indicating that a stored telephone number is associated with a wireless telephone corresponding to said subscriber, such that

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during a process that said requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, said subscriber's wireless telephone number is not disclosed to said requester.